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ON THE EFFECTS OF MALE FERN BUDS, IN CASES OF WORMS.

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THE more certain remedies generally used for worms are so disgusting, that many adults and children cannot get over the loathing of them. They dislike the tin, because it produces a belching of gas, like sulphuretted hydrogen; the cowhage, because it "sticks in their throats, and all the way down;" and the turpentine, because its flavor is "quite hateful," and its effect not an exhilarating, but a crying drunkenness.

These objections prompted me to look about for a more agreeable remedy than either of them, and of equal efficacy. Dr. Peschier, of Geneva, asserts that he has cured 150 cases of lumbrici, tricocephales, and teniæ, in nine months, with the ETHEREAL TINCTURE OF MALE FERN BUDS (*polypodium filix mas*), in doses varying from viij. to xxx. gtt., in as many pills as there are drops. His brother, an apothecary at Geneva, and the discoverer of this "tincture" or "oil," gives it in thirty to thirty-six drop doses, in syrup or castor oil, or in pills, one half at night, and the other on the following morning; and, two hours after the morning dose, ʒij. Ol. Ricini. This quantity is usually sufficient to expel the worms. I have given it on a lump of sugar, and no child has hitherto revolted against it. It has had three results; either it has killed or *burst* the worms, or it has urged them from the bowels alive, or it has had no effect at all. My worm cases as yet have been too few to develope its powers, and the preparation used was made of dried stalks and buds obtained from Covent-garden market, and not worth relying on. An herb-gatherer from the Forest of Dean brought me about a peck last month, the tops or buds of which have been snipped off, and, after drying by insolation, put into a quart of ether. This person, an intelligent sort of woman, informs me that her grandmother, Sarah Boughton, in my father's parish of Ruardean, who died, aged seventy-five years, about twelve years ago, and was what the country venerate under the name of a "yarb woman," was wont to gather the male fern buds, and let them wither, and then dry them in an oven and reduce them to powder, which she gave to children for worms. Her grand-daughter also bruises the stems (the redder the better), boils them to a thread in fresh liquor, and so makes an ointment, with which, she says, she scatters gathering breasts with great success. In this part of the country, fern is boiled and given as food to pigs.

Madame Noyau, or Noyer, raked up the powder of the root from the tombs of the ancients, and procured a reward for it from the French government as *her* specific, forsooth! This woman, like a great many other people who pretend to have discovered what was very well known before, had the fame of having brought it into notice—I apprehend, from the good luck of being about great people and the court.

Nicholas Culpeper, who lived long before her (from 1616 to 1653), but was not quite so conspicuously situated, anticipated her in all she knew of it in cases of teniæ, for he distinctly says, " It kills both *flat* and *round* worms." William Salmon (1684) says, " It kills *long flat* worms, drunk in mead with gr. x. of scammony, and so it expels the dead child, and helps obstruction of the spleen." *New London Dispensatory*, 1676, pp. 56–7). In his splendid folio Herbal (1710) he directs ʒj. of the powder of the male fern to be given with gr. xv. of scammony in black hellebore. Whether old Gerard, who wrote in Elizabeth's reign, and whose placid discourse savors of " the sweet and pleasant flowers " which he describes, anticipates these qualities of the fern, I am not aware.

The female fern has the same properties as the male, but is weaker. I have not entered all my worm-cases in the case-book ; some, however, are preserved.

On March 29, 1834, the four children of Thomas Preece, of Brampton Abbots, were ordered to take eight pills twice a day, each pill consisting of a bitter extract, and containing gtt. j. of the ethereal tincture of male fern buds. The worms came away dead and " bursted " from all of the children, who then took a purge of salts and senna, and, on April 5th, another round of the fern-drop pills. On May 7th the mother told me they were free from all symptoms and appearances of worms, and they were directed to take a teaspoonful of common salt in water once a week to remove the disposition to them.

On the 24th March, 1835, Mary Nelms brought her two children to me for worms. I ordered them to take gtt. x. of the ethereal tincture of fern buds three times a day on a lump of sugar, and a x. gr. purge of scammony, gamboge, jalap, and calomel, every third morning. One of the children after taking the drops voided six worms, one after another, alive ; the other a still greater number.

On the 9th of March preceding, Joseph (æt. 2) and Mary Jackson (æt. 5), George Meredith (æt. 9), and Elizabeth (æt. 2½), took the same remedies, and passed quantities of thread-worms (*cucurbitina*), after taking the powders, alive. I then ordered them to take muriatic acid.

Ann Mansell came to me on the 14th of April last, with three children,—Marianne (æt. 5), Esther (æt. 2½), Joseph (æt. six months) : she had " seen worms full of young ones " come from the first two. I ordered them the preceding remedies, but they passed nothing except slimy mucus, which frequently exists without worms, and is attended with the same symptoms.

On the 7th of May, Charlotte Meredith brought her two children again ; a boy æt. 4, and a sucking infant. The last had passed worms *while at the breast*. The fern-bud tincture was given till the 4th of June without effect, and I then ordered calomel to be taken at night, and scammony and jalap in the morning, which removed them. She thought she had given the tincture in a wrong manner, as it had fully succeeded with Jackson's children under the same roof. Both these families lived in a situation where they were constantly subject to worms.

It is not known, I believe, that iodine will kill worms. Thomas Greenaway, æt. 23, affected with phthisis and pyrosis, of which he ultimately died, inhaled Sir C. Scudamore's combination of iodine (a remedy from which no consumptive patient under my care has received the slightest benefit, but, if anything, rather harm), upon which he passed white worms an inch long, with flat heads (*cucurbitina ?*). I gave him—R. Sp. Tereb. Rect. ʒj. ; Ol. Ricini ℥ss. ; Liq. Opii Sed. gtt. vj. M., ft. haustus. It brought away upwards and downwards the *debris* of at least fifty dead worms of three sorts, all of which appeared to have been killed from the time he inhaled the iodine. He lost a dreadful gnawing of the stomach, which had been ascribed to gastrodynia, and upon which the old writers laid so much stress as a characteristic symptom of worms in occult cases attended with convulsions.

The gipsies put a branch of French holly (variegated garden holly), with the leaves and thorn at the end, into an oven and dry the leaves, and then reduce them to powder, of which they give as much as will lie on a sixpence five or six times, and report it to be a sure vermifuge.

The foresters of Dean give the bear's foot (*helleborus fœtidus*) in a sufficient dose of the dried leaves to cover a sixpence. It was recommended by Schroder and other old writers, and is mentioned by some moderns as "possessing extraordinary anthelmintic powers," but it is violent and dangerous, according to the former, to "gross bodies," and to all except "strong bodies." Gunpowder in gin (ʒj. to ℥j.), is considered a popular and effective anthelmintic, in some counties, particularly, I believe, in Cornwall.

The extract of esula or sponge was the general worm-remedy of the old physicians, who ascribe great cures to it. The drastic purgatives are commonly used in the country by medical men, but are very uncertain; they serve to remove the mucus in which the worms exist, and expose them to the action of more direct anthelmintics.

What are the causes of invermination ?

Herefordshire is quite a worm country, among the laboring classes, on the hilly parts in this neighborhood, though they have places of their own, tenements and gardens, and some orcharding or arable, taken out of the waste, and are nothing like so ill fed, clothed, and employed, as their own order in many other counties ; they are rather, generally, a relic of the almost extinct race of English peasantry. But there are very few of their children that are not possessed of worms, putting one in mind of Swift's lines :—

> "Whatever we do, whatever we see,
> All mankind are worms."

The worms come alive at the same time, in many cases, from the mouths and ani of grown persons and children, which happens, according to Dr. Robert Dyer, among the blacks in the Mauritius. Professors and authors ascribe them to bad air, bad food, want of sun, vegetables covered with larvæ, and bad water containing the small germs of them (*Professor Elliotson*), and invisible ovula floating in the atmosphere, obtaining admission into the alimentary tubes of persons, chiefly children and sickly adults, whose animal fluids are in such a state as to form a proper medium for their growth and increase. (*Anon.*) Many persons, on going to particular parts, have suddenly been subject to worms, just like other people in that particular neighborhood. Persons who have drunk bad water, have frequently from that time most decidedly had worms. In a particular family the whole, as well as the servants who came, had ascarides. They were discovered in a well, from which the people drew their water, and went away on the people ceasing to drink the water. (*Dublin Transactions*, Vol. II.) Drs. Thompson and Rickets gave the case of a young woman in Ireland, "who drank water from the graves of pious clergymen!" This idiot, by way of a blessing upon holy-water drinking, threw up 700 larvæ of the common beetle and of diphtherous insects, and, in the course of a year and a half, 1300 more! The larvæ of cheese and game, called hoppers, and of the pantry fly and beetle, may be introduced and flourish in debilitated stomachs and bowels. (*Good.*) Preece's wife, whose children's cases I have mentioned, told me, that for want of any other water they were obliged to drink brook water, which, after a time, was covered with floating appearances, to which she attributed the generation of worms in her children. But if they were taken in with the water, how did it come to pass that she had a child *at the breast* so full of worms that they crawled alive out of the mouth and anus, as if the child were eaten up by them? The irritation and convulsions which ensued were fatal. How could this child, nourished with breast milk, or with pap made with boiled water, so derive them; or how does it happen, if water be the chief cause, that worms are quite as common where the water certainly is not blameworthy? If children at the breast have worms, the saying of John Wesley, who collected into his "Primitive Physic" all the old women's sayings and "*desper't* good *receipts*" in the country, that "worms are never found in children that live wholly on milk," is not true. Bad diet, the eating of trashy fruit and vegetables, the lying about of filth and decayed animal and vegetable matter covered with larvæ, faulty nutrition, vitiated secretions of the mucous membrane of the stomach and intestines, and peculiar states of health, in which, nevertheless, ruddy cheeks and animal vigor may not be wanting, certainly predispose to worms; but still the question, "Whence come they, and how do they get there?" is not solved.—*Lancet.*

ON THE CAUSES OF SPONTANEOUS HUMAN COMBUSTION.

FROM AN ESSAY BY JAMES OVERTON, M.D. OF NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE.

[Concluded from page 154.]

By what means, then, it may be here repeated, are we enabled to account for the extreme combustibility of the living body, which is present in cases when it is the subject of spontaneous combustion? This state is said, in general terms, to be the effect of an asthenic state of the organism; which condition may be the product of very numerous and different causes, as old age, protracted disease, sedentary and other debilitating habits, and any excesses in modes of living calculated to enervate and enfeeble the constitution of the subject. The abusive use of strong drinks, and especially of brandy, on the continent of Europe, is known to produce great debility of the system, and particularly of those vessels which are termed absorbents. This condition in certain cases seems to be competent to give rise to a mass of inflammable material, and which seems capable of accumulation in different portions of the system in greater or less abundance, in conformity with its diversity of structure in its different parts. It is argued that a material thus characterized, must of necessity possess the property of penetrating easily through the cells of the cellular membrane, which is everywhere distributed in greater or less abundance through the substance of the organism. This membrane is modified in its aspect and functions in different localities, by the property of greater or less density, in accordance with the peculiar collocation of its fibres in the individual portion of the body which may become the object of any particular observation. In some parts, it is more dense and impervious ; in others, its structure is loose and reticulated, affording in such cases an easy transit of fluids through its substance from cell to cell, of which its structure is apparently only a continued series. The combustible material above alluded to, and which is supposed to be accumulated in the cellular tissue, should also possess the quality of retaining its own combustibility even when in contact with liquid substances ; otherwise its efficient properties in the present instance would be destroyed as fast as it was produced, by the fluids of the body, with which it would be placed in contact. The material, therefore, in this instance, which is competent to render the whole body imminently combustible, must, in addition to other qualities, possess the property of preserving its own combustibility when placed in protracted and intimate contact with fluid bodies.

There are no known bodies in which these apparently indispensable conditions unite in so high a degree as in the inflammable gases ; and it is believed that, without the admission of the agency of these, it will be utterly impossible to furnish anything like a satisfactory explanation of the phenomenon of spontaneous combustion. To render the human body then combustible, it appears to be indispensable that we should admit also the accumulation of inflammable gas in the cellular tissue of the body, after the mode in which lymph is accumulated in the same membrane, in persons affected with the disease of anasarca. It is not, however, necessary that we should assume as pre-existent, the whole quantity of this gas needful for the entire incineration of the body ; an effect which is sometimes, nay frequently, the product of these accidents. The process of combustion having once been set up through the instrumentality of the causes which have been noticed, we may reasonably suppose that it might be continued, through the agency of other gaseous materials, the product of the combustion of different portions of the body charged with the inflammable gas, and which had primarily contributed to render it combustible.

It is objected, however, to this explanation of the combustibility of the body, that upon the supposition of its truth, there must have existed in all persons who have been the subject of its attack, a general emphysematous state of the body ; which state, though sometimes present, is by much too rare an occurrence to justify the very important roll assigned to inflammable gas, in the above theory of spontaneous combustion.

The supposition, however, already stated, viz. that the entire quantity of inflammable gas present in the incipiency of most instances of this process, has been incompetent to its completion, but sufficient only for its inception, whilst that additional quantities are produced during its progress, is calculated to evade the force of this objection, and to maintain the theory unhurt by the discredit which this objection was intended to produce. Hydrogen gas is one of the principal elements of the animal living body. Its presence is abundantly disclosed by unquestionable phenomena during life as well as death; and it is submissive, during this association, to the most varied combinations with carbon, sulphur and phosphorus. Notwithstanding the general admission of this principle which has obtained, it has been thought not unnecessary to detail a few special instances confirmatory of this belief of its frequent existence, and calculated to bring it into closer connection with the particular subject of spontaneous combustion. Among these may be mentioned the case of Morton, who saw a flame to emanate from under the skin of a hog, at the instant of making an incision through it. The animal was dead at the time of making the observation.

Ruysh having introduced a hollow bougie into the stomach of a female subject, whose abdominal cavity had just been opened, observed a vapor to spout out through the tube, and which took fire as it came into contact with the surrounding atmosphere. He remarked a similar fact in the examination of another female, who for the last four days preceding her death, had taken no kind of nourishment—and in other observations which he made, this gas generated in the stomach, and brought into contact with the atmospheric air, was observed to take fire without the intervention of any other body in a state of ignition. Such among many others is the case reported to have occurred near Neufchatel in France, and detailed in the memoirs of the Royal Academy of Sciences of Paris for the year 1751. A butcher opened a beef which had been some time diseased and was very much swollen; at this moment an explosion took place, and there issued from the maw of the animal, a flame which rose to the height of more than five feet, wounded the butcher as well as a little girl who happened to be near him, continued to blaze for several minutes, and diffused around a highly offensive odor. The production of hydrogen gas, also, in some of the cavities of the body during life, is a fact too notorious to be the subject of question or doubt. It is known to take place daily in the intestinal canal; and instances, such as have been cited above, are by no means rare in the annals of medicine. Many writers speak of burning eructations. They appear to have occurred most frequently in northern latitudes; when after an abusive use of ardent spirit, the inebriate has suddenly exposed himself to the impression of a cold and dry atmosphere. Not many years ago an instance of this latter character was published in the National Gazette of Bohemia. It occurred in the person of a shepherd, who died in the presence of many witnesses to the catastrophe, in consequence of a burning eructation, and which no means were competent to extinguish. In these cases of inflammable eructations it is supposed, with much plausibility, that the decomposition of alcohol and of animal substances which were present in the stomach, had formed in this cavity phosphoreted hydrogen gas, which, being spontaneously combustible, has taken fire when expelled and placed in contact with the common air of the atmosphere. In these cases, the inflammation has been confined to the air expelled by eructation, and has not extended to other parts of the body, because its cause was evidently local and had not diffused itself to the organism generally.

Of the combustibility of the body, none, it is presumed, will any longer doubt ; of the *quo mode* of the production of this strange condition of the living organism, none have as yet supplied us with a desirable explanation. The explication, however, has been attempted, and seems plausible enough. It consists in the assumption of the existence of the matter of hydrogen gas, diffused in greater or less quantities through the body, according to the structure of its different parts, and transmitted by the agency of the cellular membrane. Whether this gas is formed in the stomach and alimentary canal, and subsequently transported to the cellular tissue by the absorbents or other vessels, or be primarily formed in the vesicles of this tissue, by an action peculiar to its own functions, we are furnished with no information which enables us to decide. The fact as before stated, is assumed in the absence of such evidence as could be esteemed competent for the perfect establishment of its truth ; and rests apparently upon the considerations that hydrogen gas does manifestly exist, and that to a considerable extent in other parts of the body ; and that without the supposition of its presence and agency in the cellular tissues of the body, it will be impossible to account for the phenomena which are frequently presented in spontaneous combustion. It is argued, however, that because we are obliged by the force of competent testimony to admit the development and accumulation of hydrogen gas in other parts of the body, it would require no unreasonable credulity to believe in a similar development and accumulation in the cellular tissue, more or less abundant in different localities, according to the greater or less laxity of this membrane in the different portions of the body ; and that as a corollary from this admission, the softer parts of the body as a necessary consequence would be much subject to those gaseous accumulations—as the trunk of the body, which from the greater laxity of its cellular tissue seems specially liable to these accumulations. The generation then of an inflammable gas, and its general diffusion through the cellular tissue of the body, seems to be a condition of the living system, necessary for the production of that state which renders it combustible.

But supposing the foregoing etiology of the disease to be made out with entire satisfaction, by the facts and arguments which have been submitted, there still hangs over this obscure subject, difficulties which claim to be removed, before we can justly pretend to have arrived at anything like a perfect apprehension of its character. For, even in conditions of the body such as have been assumed, having its cellular tissue thoroughly imbued with the matter of inflammable gas, and hence imminently combustible, or, in simpler terms, easily set on fire by the intervention of an ignited body, yet " spontaneous combustion " could not under such circumstances take place, except in the single case in which phosphoreted hydrogen, the only spontaneous combustible gas shown to be generated in the living body, should be the material collected in the tissues of the system. In the case last supposed, we cannot hesitate to believe that "spontaneous combustion" would occur, as soon as this gas escaping from the cells of the body should find itself in contact with the common atmosphere; and thus would exhibit most of the phenomena, and possibly an important illustration of the causes of spontaneous animal combustion.

For the purpose therefore of affording a reasonable explication of the accident, in conformity with the supposition of the presence and diffusion of the matter of hydrogen gas, it is apparently indispensable that we should account for the production of an ignited spark, by the agency of the living body, from causes intrinsic of itself, or by other causes immediately, but usually in harmless contact with its surface. This has been attempted to be done, and has been accomplished with much plausibility, through the agency of electricity, at the least in some instances. For, cases of this accident are on record, in which the circumstances of the sufferer have been clearly ascertained to have been inconsistent with the possible agency of any cause of ignition, other than such as may have been derived from the surrounding atmosphere.

By the comparison of these and other facts of a similar nature, with the phenomena of the accident as it occurred in the persons of Father Bertholi, and of our own townsman, we are strongly induced to assign to electricity a very important roll among the productive agents of spontaneous combustion. We shall indeed be induced to look upon this material as probably the most frequent exciting cause of these accidents; and without whose presence and agency most if not all of them could not have occurred. Are we competent to show in what manner this electric spark is produced by the agency of the living organism? Upon the hypothesis stated, this will be an indispensable requisition, in order to account for the commencement of the combustion, in materials not spontaneously combustible. To this inquiry it may be answered that the ideo-electric character of many animals, is a fact which is too notorious to admit of denial. It is equally true, though somewhat less the object of common observation, that this ideo-electric power is possessed in a high degree by many individuals of our own species. Of the entire truth of this assertion we are not permitted to entertain the least doubt. Testimony is abundant, and unanswerably conclusive in support of its authenticity. The celebrated traveller Brydone, made experiments upon a female, who possessed this ideo-electric property in so high a degree, that brilliant electric sparks glistened upon her hair, whenever she combed her head. Brydone even succeeded in charging a Leyden phial with these electric particles, and ignited spirit of wine with the sparks drawn from the same source. The weather was freezing during the time of the performance of these experiments; and in this respect, similar to the character of the atmosphere which is present at the time of the occurrence of most cases of spontaneous human combustion. A similar ideo-elective power is said to be possessed by an eminent statesman of our own country, Mr. Dayton, of New Jersey, and that this property was upon one occasion particularly manifest, whilst attending to his official duties at the city of Washington. In taking off his stockings, which were composed of silk and wool, at bed-time, brilliant electric sparks were strikingly apparent upon the whole surface of his leg. Had the state of the organism favored its development, "spontaneous combustion" would upon the present occasion have been established. The exciting cause was present and in great activity, and failed to induce the catastrophe, only because of the absence of the requisite predisposition, which intemperance and other causes of debility are known to engender. The cases which have been stated, together with such as have fallen within the observation of most persons, might be competent for the ample establishment of the existence of this ideo-electric property in the human species. The fact, however, rests upon broader foundations; and the books of medicine, ancient as well as modern, may be referred to, as furnishing abundant and well-attested instances of a similar nature. The accumulation of the inflammable gases in the bodies of the victims of spontaneous combustion, is supposed also to augment this ideo-electric property; and the temporary or accidental application of warmth in cold atmospheres, has been esteemed favorable to the explosion of the igniting spark. It is in this way that the proximity of fire or a lighted candle has been thought in some instances to have aided in the production of the spontaneous combustion of the human body. In other cases upon the same principle, a similar aptitude for the development of this accident has been attributed to the effect of exercise, capable of elevating the natural standard of animal heat; or to any other cause, such as friction by electrics on the surface of the skin, favoring the production of an electric spark, in persons possessing ideo-electric properties.

The electric spark excited in the foregoing manner, pervades with astonishing rapidity the whole body of an individual, impregnated as it were in all its parts by the material of combustion; and this material becoming ignited at all points almost at the same instant, is so constituted that it will not be extinguished by the aqueous portions of the body, in consequence of the little chemical affinity which exists between their elements. The combustion has consequently, in the greater number of cases, been produced with such rapid and unchecked activity, that the unfortunate victims of its infliction have not been afforded the time to call assistance for their relief. The flame, as has been proved by the observation of others in some few cases, has in the first instance swept rapidly over the external surface of the body; its inception being confined to this exterior locality, because here alone its material could be in contact with the common air, an element essential to the existence of the process. From this beginning the combustion has been rapidly propagated in the manner heretofore attempted to be explained, to the more deep-seated portions of the organism, indeed to the entire substance of the body. The process, however, which we have just stated, is not in every instance of this general character. In some instances it appears to be restricted to portions of the body of less or greater extent, and gives origin to those cases of partial spontaneous combustion, a few of which have been detailed in this essay, as meriting particular notice.

I have thus, gentlemen, attempted to submit for your consideration, some account of the phenomena, causes and character of "spontaneous human combustion." The subject is one of great obscurity, and of comparatively very unfrequent occurrence; and consequently has not received the close, repeated and critical examination from the profession, which has been bestowed upon many other objects of medical inquiry. The explication of its phenomena which has been tendered, though subject doubtless to many objections, appears however to be the most plausible of any which is afforded by the present state of our knowledge.

DENTAL SURGERY.

[A RESOLUTION was laid before the Counsellors of the Mass. Medical Society in May last, which had for its object an elevation of the practising dentist, to all the privileges and immunities of the practitioner of medicine—making mechanical skill in a particular department of surgery, equal to the acquisition of abstract science. The adoption of the resolution would, in fact, have been the declaration of a learned body of savans, that a knowledge of dentistry, alone, was equal to the sum of all that pertains to the healing art. The report of the committee is excellent, being both respectful and judicious, and we heartily commend its perusal to the advocates of order and method in the arrangement of useful knowledge.—ED.]

The Committee to whom were referred, at the meeting of the Counsellors in May, 1835, several resolutions relative to dental surgery, have had the same under consideration, and respectfully submit the following report.

The object of these resolutions is to require that the medical practitioners, heretofore called dentists and surgeon-dentists, be regarded in the same light as physicians and surgeons in the common acceptation of these terms; and that, accordingly, the By-Law of the Society forbidding consultation with irregular practitioners as described in the same, be considered as applicable to dentists or surgeon-dentists.

Your Committee approve the object of these resolutions as above stated; but some other things are also embraced in them. Without a direct reference to them, the Committee will offer such observations as will explain their own views, and then propose a measure to be adopted.

The business of the dentist is partly mechanical, such as extracting teeth, filling cavities in them caused by caries, and making and fixing in the mouth artificial teeth. These offices may be performed as directed by a physician, or at the will of the patient, who takes the responsibility on himself. But it is obviously convenient that the dentist should himself understand the physiology and pathology of the teeth, so that he may be able to advise the patient as to these operations, and as to all other matters connected with the teeth; as well as that he may successfully study the treatment adapted to the diseases of these important organs. Yet as the teeth, although differing from other organs in very important points, are subject in some measure to the same laws as other organs in the animal body, and are intimately connected with them, the dentist cannot well understand their diseases without an acquaintance with the science of medicine generally. It is then to be desired that this branch of surgery, called dental, should be conducted by those only who are prepared by education to practise any branch of the healing art. It is however very doubtful whether any advantage would arise from creating or recognizing a separate branch of the medical profession under the name of dental surgery. * There might be as much reason for having branches for the distinct arts of the oculist and the aurist ; and perhaps for that of the lithotomist, &c. &c. It has been the policy of modern times to prevent this formal sub-division of the medical profession, and this has been true as respects our own country. It has been thought best that the education during pupilage should be the same for the physician and surgeon, and this is perhaps the universal practice in the United States. On entering into professional life, individuals give their attention to all the branches of the healing art, or devote themselves to one more or less exclusively ; but the distinction thus created is not formrlly acknowledged by our public bodies. It is true that this Society may give a license to practise either physic, or surgery, or both, to the candidates who apply to them ; but the custom has been, almost if not quite without an exception, to give a license to practise both. In Europe the inconveniences of a different course are much complained of, so that enlightened men in Great Britain, at the present day, are anxious to adopt a course similar to ours. It does not then seem wise to designate a class of medical men as dentists, whether by requiring that they go through a specific education, or by imposing upon them peculiar obligations, or by conferring on them peculiar privileges. Let it be left to individuals, who devote themselves to particular branches of the profession, to satisfy the public of their particular qualifications, as has been done heretofore.

There now recurs the question whether a fellow of this Society can or ought to consult with, aid or abet a dentist, if he is not a fellow of the Society, or has not a right to claim admittance as a fellow into the same.

The practice certainly has been, ever since the adoption in 1804 of the By-Law respecting consultations, to allow such consultation and aid. This practice arose, no doubt, under the belief that the dentists confined themselves principally to the mechanical part of their business. When that By-Law was passed, very few persons in the Commonwealth were devoted to dentistry, probably not six ; and of those, such as were well known, were both ingenious and respectable men. At that time neither the physiology nor the pathology of the teeth had been much studied by medical men among us ; although Hunter's invaluable work had been published in the last century, it had not become known to many of our physicians, and still less had the subject been studied under the lights shed on it at the present day. In point of fact, the medical men who composed this Society in 1804 were probably aware that the few dentists in our State were better qualified than themselves, and, even, better than many of them wished to be, for the mechanical department of dental surgery ; and, without any formal act, it was settled by silent consent that the By-Law as to consultations should not be applied to dentists. This practical interpretation of the law through so many years must be regarded as settling the question, until some new law or ordinance is passed in regard to it. Since the period above referred to (1804), dental surgery has been studied and pursued more scientifically than previously, and by gentlemen of regular medical education. It would seem that the community must have derived palpable benefits from these scientific dentists, since the number of gentlemen among us, occupied almost exclusively as such, has greatly increased, and it is understood that they have been well supported. It is now a different question from what it would have been thirty years ago, whether the fellows of this Society should countenance any one entering this branch of the profession. The decision on this question should be made by a regard to the welfare of the community. If the fellows of this Society have any interest in the question, separate from that of the community, it ought not to influence the decision. The By-Law respecting consultations was adopted, and can be justified, on no other grounds.

From what has been stated it appears to the Committee that the welfare of the community would now be promoted by such measures as should tend to confine the practice of dentistry to regularly educated physicians, but not by a formal recognition of its practitioners as a distinct class of the profession; and as the subject has not been thus regarded heretofore, that some distinct act is necessary to establish the principle proposed. In adopting this act, however, it seems proper that the same regard be paid to those actually engaged in the dental practice, as was paid to general practitioners when the By-Law of 1804 in regard to consultations was adopted. The act proposed should not be made retrospective. Let those dentists, already engaged in practice, be recognized or not according to their personal characters and merits. By this provision we shall guard against injustice toward respectable individuals, whose experience may have enabled them to render very useful services to the suffering, although they may not be adequate to the treatment of all the diseases of the teeth, and who, moreover, have in fact been encouraged to enter on their business by the countenance of the fellows of this Society.

In conformity with the views here presented, the Committee propose the following as a substitute for the resolutions referred to them; so that, if the same be approved by the Counsellors, it may be duly brought forward at the next annual meeting of the Society, and be recommended to its fellows to be passed as a By-Law.

" From and after this annual meeting (1836), persons entering on the practice of dental surgery shall be regarded like other practitioners of medicine or surgery, so that the eighth By-Law shall be applied to them; provided, however, that the same shall not be applied to those persons who are already known as dentists."

All which is respectfully submitted.

BOSTON MEDICAL AND SURGICAL JOURNAL.

BOSTON, OCTOBER 21, 1835.

MASSACHUSETTS MEDICAL SOCIETY.

A STATED meeting of the Counsellors was held at the Athenæum on Wednesday, Oct. 7th, at eleven o'clock, A. M. There appeared to be a very good representation of the interests of the Society from adjacent counties, at a seasonable hour for the commencement of business. Dr. Warren, the President, having taken the chair, and the records of the last meeting having been read by the Recording Secretary, Dr. Homans, the Corresponding Secretary announced the names of the following gentlemen who have been admitted fellows of the Society, since May—viz.—Willard Parker, M.D. Pittsfield ; John H. Gushee, M.D. Raynham ; Francis Clark, M.D. Andover ; William F. Perry, M.D. Mansfield ; Ezra Stephenson, M.D. Barnstable ; and Lewis G. Glover, M.D. Boston. He further presented a letter from Dr. Bugbee, of Wrentham, declining the honor of giving the next anniversary discourse, referred to in last week's Journal ; the Counsellors, therefore, by ballot, elected Dr. Fowler, of Stockbridge, in his stead, whose acceptance has not yet been received. An abstract of a very able and lucid report upon the subject of the claims of surgeon-dentists, to an equality of professional standing with physicians and surgeons, which may be found on another page, was then read. Dr. Hale, chairman of the Committee of Publication, reported that the second volume of Copland's Dictionary was in progress, but not yet ready for delivery. It was voted that the Committee be instructed to proceed in procuring the second and third volumes of this valuable work, for the Society, at any time within the ensuing year, in the same manner as the first volume, it being understood that the third may possibly be completed by the ensuing anniversary.

Dr. Ware, chairman of the Committee on intermittent fever, remarked that no returns had yet been made in answer to the circulars addressed to the fellows, requesting information upon the subject of inquiry, and therefore asked leave to sit again, which was granted.

Voted, that the thanks of the Counsellors be presented to the Provincial Medical and Surgical Association of Great Britain, for the donation of two volumes, published under its auspices, represented by Dr. Channing to be exceedingly valuable—and the Corresponding Secretary was directed to forward, in acknowledgment of the compliment, the original publications of this Society.

A protracted discussion ensued in relation to the manner of awarding the Society's premium of five hundred dollars for the best sample of not less than a thousand leeches, from a foreign stock, bred in this Commonwealth, within the period of seven years. We were not only excessively weary of the subject, but came to the conclusion that others were also. However, the following comprises the names of the Committee with whom specimens may be left by claimants—viz. Drs. Miller, B. Shurtleff, G. Willard, D. Bemis, E. Alden, W. Channing, A. L. Pierson, A. G. Welsh, W. C. Whitbridge, W. Walker, E. Buck, A. F. Stone, H. Orr, and J. Sampson. The Committee is to continue in being seven years, reporting annually to the Counsellors, who are empowered to fill all vacancies that may occur in the mean time.

Dr. Jacob Bigelow, Dr. George W. Otis, and Dr. John Jeffries, were elected a Committee to revise the list of books required as well as recommended to be read by students of medicine. A Committee was also appointed, consisting of Dr. John C. Warren, Dr. J. V. C. Smith, and Dr. David Osgood, to prepare a list of gentlemen, distinguished in the profession, entitled to the distinction of honorary fellowship in the Society.

Some minor concerns were presented to the Council and appropriately disposed of, the particulars of which are not distinctly recollected. All that is essential, however, interesting to the immediate members, is comprised in the foregoing report. A most excellent spirit was manifested, highly conducive to the respectability and dignity of this wisely devised association, on whose decisions the public may safely rely with regard to the character, acquirements, and moral qualifications of every man who is permitted, under its auspices, to practise medicine and surgery in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

THE SCIENCE OF LIFE.

A COURSE of popular lectures has been commenced in this city, by a gentleman who has made himself singularly distinguished for his supposed warfare against certain domestic habits which predominate in civil life, principally connected with the pleasures of the palate ; in a word, he seems to have strangely secured the reputation of aiming to become an acetic reformer of the age, without having the ability to establish those self-denying laws essential to the perpetuity of the novel doctrines he is very earnestly laboring to maintain.

Influenced by all the prejudices usually operating against the introduction of new doctrines, supposed, without much reflection, however, to be openly at variance with the acknowledged principles of physiology, and braced up by theoretical and unphilosophical speculations, we heard Mr. Graham's introductory discourse on the Science of Life, at the Boylston Hall. We listened attentively, too, for more than one hour and a half, to a discourse that would have reflected honor upon the first medical man in America. This declaration is not the effervescence of a sudden conversion. Mr. Graham presented nothing extravagant—nothing that was not positively correct in relation to life, health and disease. So far from being the originator of a new system, totally opposed to those facts in the science of life, already extensively promulgated and practised upon by all well educated physicians, he simply exhibited himself to be a fearless, independent, benevolent expounder of this difficult science, which he seems to be endeavoring to make plain to the comprehension of all classes of intelligent, reflecting people.

We are utterly amazed at the ridicule with which this gentleman has been assailed in other places, if what we have heard is the type of what is to follow. With such strict regard to the positive indications of nature as he exhibits, based upon known physiological laws, there is no denying his propositions. Both his language and his illustrations were in strict accordance, in our humble apprehension, with the best medical authors.

Nothing would induce us to lend a helping hand in building up a prating knave, or a stupid pretender, But to speak otherwise than decidedly favorable of Mr. Graham's introductory lecture, would be high-handed injustice. If he actually pursues the course he so ably and fervently urged upon the community, the medical profession, above all others, will be benefited and dignified by it, and the world at large must ultimately be bettered by the influence of the knowledge he is disseminating. Should he, on the other hand, hereafter sink himself in the mazes of designing quackery, from an inordinate desire of fame, or other selfish motives, we should be among the first to abandon him and expose the deception.

These observations have no reference to any peculiar developments, which have been said to be characteristic of Mr. Graham's anticipated scheme of dietetic reformation. Whether he may eventually attempt to prove that man is not omnivorous, or that raw vegetables are more conducive to health and longevity than roast beef and mutton, we cannot presume to determine. No problem is more susceptible of demonstration than this—that we have so much refined upon life, and so multiplied both our wants and the means of animal gratification, that we are much oftener overpowered by physical excitement than by the effects of mental activity. With all the means bountifully provided by the hand of a benevolent Creator for a long, a vigorous and happy life, we are habitually warring against the plainest indications of common sense, and number our own days before we have wisely reflected upon the great object of existence.

Hydriodate of Potash.—Two cases are related in the London Lancet, by Dr. Wilkinson, in which this article was successfully employed. The first was a scrofulous affection of the knee joint. The knee was considerably swollen, but without redness, and presented several ulcers, the discharge from which was sometimes thin and ichorous, and at others mixed with white and opaque matter. A complete cure was effected by the internal use of the hydriodate of potash, combined with Carb. Sodæ and Aquæ Menthæ Pip. The second case was one of hydrocele, in a boy seven years of age. A drachm of the ointment of the hydriodate, in the proportion of ʒj. to an ounce of lard, was rubbed in three times a day; afterwards, half the quantity additional was used, which, with puncturing, effected a complete and radical cure.

New Medical Appointment.—John B. Stebbins, M.D. of this city, has been unanimously elected physician to the House of Reformation for Juvenile Offenders, located at South Boston. The office has been recently created by the Board of Overseers, and we congratulate them as well as the inmates of the institution, on this happy choice of a medical adviser, who is well qualified to give character to the station in which he has been placed.

Medical Magazine.—We understand that the medical periodical by this name, published in Boston, which was under the editorial charge of Drs. Flint, Bartlett and Gould, has been discontinued.

Essay on Climate.—The Royal Irish Academy has awarded Dr. Joseph McSweeny, of Cork, the prize of £40 for the best essay on the climate of Ireland.

M. Cruveilhier has been appointed to the Chair of Pathological Anatomy, founded by Dupuytren.

To Correspondents.—Dr. Gold's Communication on Phthisis will appear next week. Dr. Spalding's History of the Smallpox in Montpelier, Vt. is also on file.

Died—In Cabell Co. Va. Dr. John L. Maupin, of Albermarle Co.—In Richmond, Va. Dr. James Blair, 43.—In New Haven, Ct. Dr. Isaac Beers, 43.—At Charleston, S. C. Dr. M. Cohen Meyers, aged 32—also, Dr. William A. L. Martins, aged 27, of the stranger's fever—a native of Germany.—In London, Sir Wm. Blizard, aged 93, who had been one of the surgeons of the London Hospital for nearly sixty years.

Whole number of deaths in Boston for the week ending Oct. 10, 59. Males, 31—Females, 28.

Of scarlet fever, 2—smallpox, 1—bloody flux, 1—inflammation of the lungs, 1—infantile, 4—consumption. 5—inflammatory fever, 1—dropsy on the brain, 1—quinsy, 1—measles, 11—lung fever, 5—brain fever, 2—old age, 3—cholera infantum, 1—dropsy, 1—decline, 1—bilious fever, 3—teething, 1—sudden, 2—nervous fever, 1—hooping cough, 1—drowned, 1—dysentery, 1—typhous fever, 2—suicide, 1—intemperance, 1. Stillborn, 1.

MEDICAL SCHOOL IN BOSTON.

The Medical Faculty of Harvard University announce to the public, that the Lectures will begin on the first Wednesday in Novem., and continue thirteen weeks, after which time the regular course will be considered as terminated. But for the following four weeks, the Hospital and the Dissecting room will be kept open, and some Lectures will be given, without additional expense, to such students as may choose to remain.

The following Courses of Lectures will be delivered to the class of the ensuing season:

			Fees
Anatomy, and the Operations of Surgery,	by	John C. Warren, M.D.	$15
Chemistry,	"	John W. Webster, M.D.	15
Midwifery and Medical Jurisprudence,	"	Walter Channing, M.D.	10
Materia Medica,	"	Jacob Bigelow, M.D.	10
Principles of Surgery and Clinical Surgery,	"	George Hayward, M.D.	10
Theory and Practice of Physic, and Clinical Medicine,	"	James Jackson, M.D. and John Ware, M D.	15

By an additional act of the Legislature of Massachusetts, the opportunities for the study of Practical Anatomy are now placed upon the most liberal footing. While the violation of sepulchres is prevented, it is anticipated that an ample supply of subjects for the wants of science, will be legally provided at a small expense.

The Massachusetts General Hospital is open without fee to Students attending the Lectures of the physicians and surgeons. This Institution contains about sixty beds, which are, most of the time occupied by patients who are subjects partly of medical, and partly of surgical treatment. Clinical Lectures are given several times in each week, and surgical operations are frequent. The number of surgical operations during the last five years has averaged about seventy in each year.

To the Medical College is attached a Medical Library, a costly and extensive Chemical Apparatus, and Collections illustrative of Midwifery, Materia Medica, and Healthy and Morbid Anatomy.

Boston, June 12, 1835. June 24—tN1. WALTER CHANNING, *Dean.*

A STAND FOR A PHYSICIAN.

A physician in the State of Maine, in a pleasantly situated, small, flourishing village, about 25 miles from Portland, wishes to dispose of his stand. Being a very eligible stand, and affording abundant practice, it offers a good opportunity for a physician to establish himself. For further particulars, apply to the Editor of the Journal; if by mail, post-paid. Sept 23—3m

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MEDICAL INSTITUTION OF YALE COLLEGE.

The annual Course of Lectures in this Institution will commence on Thursday, Nov. 5, 1835, and will continue seventeen weeks. There are at least five lectures daily throughout the term, and a part of the time six. The several branches are taught as follows, viz.:

Principles and Practice of Surgery, by Thomas Hubbard, M.D.
Theory and Practice of Medicine, by Eli Ives, M.D.
Chemistry and Pharmacy, by B. Silliman, M.D.
Materia Medica and Therapeutics, by William Tully, M.D.
Anatomy and Physiology, by J. Knight, M D.
Obstetrics, by Timothy P. Beers, M.D.

The fee for each of the first five branches is $12,50, and for the last $6,00, which, together with a matriculation fee of $5,00 and a contingent bill of $2,50, are to be paid in advance. The graduation fee is $15.

Since the last term, extensive alterations have been made in the College buildings;—those parts of it especially which are appropriated to anatomical purposes, have been made more extensive and commodious, and every facility will be afforded to those who wish to pursue the study of anatomy.

The price of board, lodging, &c. in New Haven, is from $2 to $3 a week, and other necessary articles in proportion. (Sept. 3—ep6w.)

AN EXCELLENT CHANCE FOR A PHYSICIAN.

A Physician in one of the western counties of New Hampshire offers to sell his stand, situated in a pleasant and flourishing village, and no other physician within five miles. For further particulars, inquire of the Editor of this Journal, or of Dr. Richards, of Claremont, N. H. Oct 7

VACCINE VIRUS.

Physicians in any part of the United States may hereafter be furnished with pure vaccine virus, by addressing the editor of the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal—*inclosing one dollar.* Letters must be post-paid, or they will not be taken from the Post Office. The virus will invariably be sent by the first mail, unless some other mode of conveyance is directed. Ten charged quills, an ample quantity for meeting any sudden emergency, and certainly sufficient to propagate a supply from, will be securely packed in a letter. The gentleman who has undertaken to keep the virus, will faithfully supply that which is positively genuine and recently taken. It will also be furnished on application at the Medical Journal office.

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